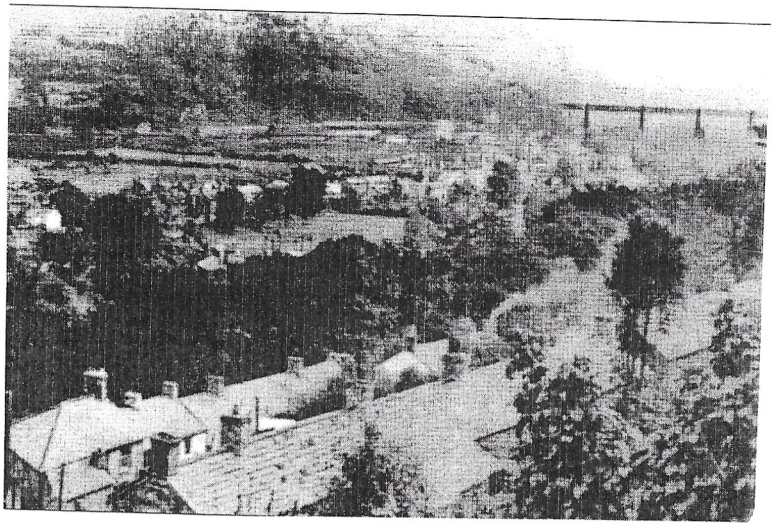


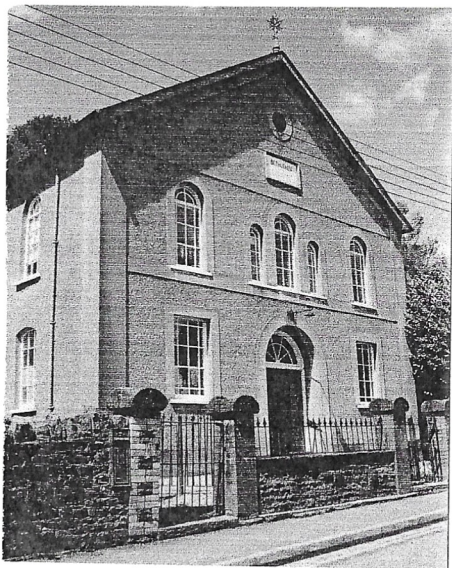
Let's turn right but we can forego the steep climb to the Mountain Road. Instead, we take the second lane on our left. Were we to proceed further uphill we would see one of the sharpest and steepest bends in Europe (on the inside shoulder the slope is one-in-one!). Below us is where several rows of dwellings were built in the middle of the 19th century, including Club Row. Several of the houses that have survived have been modernised out of all recognition.



We are now walking parallel with the main road but high above it. As we enter the wooded area we are near an old coal working known as Garth Rhondda. It is understood that coal was taken from here down a steep incline to the road and beyond to be loaded onto the Forgie line at a point near the foot of the Zig-Zag path.

This whole area is honeycombed with old coal workings (many of them illicit) to exploit the outcropping seams on this, the southern extremity of the coalfield. In springtime this patch of woodland is splash of colour with abundant bluebells sharing the ground with anemones and wild garlic.

The path eventually meanders down towards the village and we emerge at a point adjacent to Bethlehem Chapel.



Let us pause here to reflect on those personalities who were attached to this place and left such an impression. Anyone who ever attended the Good Friday Gymanfa will have little difficulty recalling those glorious, uplifting, harmonious sounds and the characters that made them. Between them, the families Phillips, Watkins, Thomas, Davies, Howells and others, although regarded by some as 'the great and the good' and famous for their black suits and umbrellas, helped to give this village a special character, the loss of which has to be deeply regretted.

Of all the people connected here we must mention the Rev RG Berry, the incumbent minister and dramatist who for half a century contributed so much to village life. Later the chapel and the Gwaelod community benefited greatly from the presence of another man of the cloth, the gentle and hugely talented Rev Gwilym Morris.

